

## 1. Paying respect by 'five establishments'

With help of Sayadaw U Vajirapāṇibhivaṃsa I have found several sources of “paying respect” modes in Pāli scriptures. The official Burmese way of paying respect to the Buddha and monks<sup>1</sup> is very different from the ways in other countries – and interestingly, it is based on a Pāli scripture. The way to pay respect is somewhat explained by the Buddha Himself in the *Parivārapāḷi*. See below also my English translation of other two later composed texts as well.

*Parivārapāli – Upālipaṇṇakam - 14. Kathinatthāravaggo*

Pāḷi	Translation of I.B. Horner <sup>2</sup>
469. "Navakatarena, bhante, bhikkhunā vuḍḍhatarassa bhikkhuno pāde vandantena kati dhamme ajjhataṃ upaṭṭhāpetvā pādā vanditabbā"ti?	"If a more newly ordained monk, revered sir, is honouring the feet of a more senior monk, when he has caused how many states to be set up within himself should he honour the feet?"
"Navakatarenupāli, bhikkhunā vuḍḍhatarassa bhikkhuno pāde vandantena pañca dhamme ajjhataṃ upaṭṭhāpetvā pādā vanditabbā.	"If a more newly ordained monk, Upāli, is honouring the feet of a more senior monk, having caused five states to be set up within himself he should honour the feet.
Katame pañca?	What five?
Navakatarenupāli, bhikkhunā vuḍḍhatarassa bhikkhuno pāde vandantena	When a more newly ordained monk, Upāli, is honouring the feet of a more senior monk,
ekaṃsaṃ uttarāsaṅgaṃ karitvā, añjaliṃ paggaheṭvā, ubho hi pāṇitalehi pādāni parisambāhantena, pemañca gāravañca upaṭṭhāpetvā pādā vanditabbā -	[1] having arranged his outer cloak over one shoulder, [2] holding out his joined palms in salutation, [3] stroking his feet on all sides with the palms of his hands, having caused <sup>3</sup> [4] regard and [5] esteem to be set up, he should honour his feet.
navakatarenupāli bhikkhunā vuḍḍhatarassa bhikkhuno pāde vandantena ime pañca dhamme ajjhataṃ upaṭṭhāpetvā pādā vanditabbā"ti.	When a more newly ordained monk, Upāli, is honouring the feet of a more senior monk, having caused these five states to be set up within himself, he should honour his feet."

*Dīgha Nikāya - Sīlakkhandhavaṃṣa-Abhinavatīkā* 2 (MM vol.2 p.18)

<i>Pāḷi</i>	English translation by monk Sarana according Nyaung-Yan-Mu Nissaya <sup>4</sup>
<i>"Pañcapaṭiṭṭhitenāti ettha pañcahi aṅgehi abhimukhaṃ ṭhitenāti attho,</i>	There by "five establishments" is meant facing (the Buddha) standing in five ways.
<i>pāda jāṇu kappara hattha sāsasankhātāni pañca aṅgāni samaṃ katvā onāmetvā abhimukhaṃ ṭhitena paṭthamaṃ vanditvāti vuttaṃ hoti.</i>	It is said "having first paid respects by bowing down, keeping feet, knees, elbows, hands, and head evenly while facing (the Buddha)."

<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned in basic Buddhist guides for Burmese people, published by government. There are pictures and explanation in easy Burmese language.

<sup>2</sup> Copied from "The Book of the Discipline – Vinayaṭīkaṃ", I.B. Horner [with "supplementary translation by Bhikkhu Brahmalī"], SuttaCentral, 2014, pp.2923-2924.

<sup>3</sup> See more information at the end of this article.

<sup>4</sup> New Subcommentary for *Dīgha Nikāya's Silakkhandhavagga* [သီလကုဋ်နိကာသင်္ဂါယနာယသံ၊ Nyaung-Yan Version [သာင်းရှမ်းမှ] vol.3, pp.52-53.

<i>Yampi vadanti "navakatarenupāli bhikkhunā vuḍḍhatarassa bhikkhuno pāde vandantena ime pañca dhamme ajjhataṃ upaṭṭhāpetvā pādā vanditabbā tiādikāṃ (pari. 469)</i>	As they also say, "Upāli, the relatively new monk should pay respects at the feet of a relatively elder monk, supporting himself by the five manners - (thus) should be paid respect at the feet, <sup>5</sup> and so on,
<i>vinayapālimāharitvā ekaṃsakaṇḍaāñjalipaggahaṇapādasambāhanapemagāravupa ṭṭhāpanavasena pañcapaṭiṭṭhitavandanā"ti, tametthānadhīpettaṃ dūrato vandane yathāvuttapañcaṅgassa aparipuṇṇattā.</i>	Citing from the Vinaya scripture, arranging (robes) over one shoulder, raising the fingers (at one's chest), stroking the feet, and keeping love and respect, it is the paying respect by five establishments. That is (however) not meant (in the original story), because when paying respects from afar the five manners explained (above) are not complete.
<i>Vandanā cettha paṇamanā añjalipaggahaṇakarapuṭasamāyogo.</i>	Paying respects is also bowing (upper part of body) together with raised fingers (at one's chest), in the manner of keeping the raised hands along (with one's bowing chest).
<i>"Pañcapaṭiṭṭhitena vanditvā"ti ca kāyapaṇāmo vutto, "mama satthuno"tiādīnā pana vacīpaṇāmo, tadubhayapurecarānucaravasena manopaṇāmoti."</i>	"Paying respect by five establishments" is called the complete bowing by body, "I to the Lord" etc. is then the complete bowing by speech, and the ability (to do so) before these two and then again and again later is the complete bowing by mind.

### Vinayalanikāra Tīkā (MM vol.2 p.368)

<i>Pāli</i>	English translation by monk Sarana
<i>"Yadi thatvā vandatha, dve pādatalāni samaṃ bhūmiyaṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā dve hatthatalāni samaṃ phusāpetvā nalāṭe paṭiṭṭhāpetvā vanditabbābhīmukhaṃ onamitvā vandathāti, -</i>	"If you pay respect while standing, keeping both soles of feet evenly on the ground, touching both palms (palm with palm) evenly, keeping them touching the forehead, respect should be paid. Pay respect by bowing (while) facing (the respected one). -
<i>ayaṃ nayo "evaṃ mahāsatto suvaṇṇakadali viya bārāṇasinagarābhīmukhaṃ onamitvā mātāpitāro vanditvā"ti</i>	This manner (is meant by the <i>Mūgapakkha jātakā</i> <sup>6</sup> ) : "thus the Great Being, like a golden banner, bowed facing the town Bārāṇasī and (thus) paid respect to his parents."
<i>imaṃ jātakatṭhakathāvacanaṇḍa "dasanakhasamodhānasamujjalaṃ añjaliṃ paggayha sirasmiṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā"tiādiṭṭhakathāvacanaṇḍa anulometi.</i>	This saying of <i>jātaka</i> is in accordance also with the commentarial account <sup>7</sup> "taking up the shine of (his) ten nails' combination [i.e. palm touching palm] and placing them on (his) head," and other (commentarial) accounts. <sup>8</sup>
<i>Idha pana dve pādatalāni, dve hatthatalāni, nalāṭāñcāti pañcasu paṭiṭṭhitānīti sarūpaṃ vadanti.</i>	(Some) say, that here actually the two soles of feet, two palms, and keeping (the palm-to-palm hands) on (one's) forehead, are the five establishments.
<i>Yadi nisīditvā vandatha, paṭṭhamam dve pādatalāni bhūmiyaṃ samaṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā dve jāṇumaṇḍalāni samaṃ ussāpetvā dve kapparāni dvinnam jāṇūnam upari samaṃ ṭhapetvā</i>	If you pay respect while sitting, first establish evenly the two soles of feet on the ground, raise both knees evenly, place both elbows on the two knees evenly,
<i>dve hatthatalāni samaṃ phusitāni katvā añjalisaṅkhātāṃ karapuṭam sirasāṅkhāte nalāṭe paṭiṭṭhāpetvā vandatha.</i>	Make the two palms touching (one another) evenly, and keeping the ("portion of") fingers on ("the portion") of head, establishing (them thus) on the forehead, pay respect.
<i>Tato onamitvā dve jāṇumaṇḍalāni ca dve kapparāni ca bhūmiyaṃ samaṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā dve hatthatalāni pasāretvā samaṃ bhūmiyaṃ ṭhapetvā sīsam ubhinnaṃ hatthapiṭṭhinam upari katvā bhūmiyaṃ paṭiṭṭhāpetvā vandathāti.</i>	Then while bowing, establish both of the knees and both of the palms on the ground, touch evenly the ground with (your) hands keeping them stretched, move (your) head over the back of the hands and then establishing (the head) on the ground, pay respect.

<sup>5</sup> Parivārapāli – Upālipaṇcakaṃ - 14. Kathinatthāravaggo

<sup>6</sup> Jātaka 538. Mūgapakkhajātakavaṇṇanā §48.

<sup>7</sup> Pārājīkakaṇḍa-aṭṭhakathā (paṭṭhamo bhāgo) – Verañjakaṇḍavaṇṇanā - Upāsakattapaṭivedanākathā

<sup>8</sup> This theme occurs in a number of commentaries, namely DNA2 - *Komārabhaccajīvakathāvaṇṇanā* & *Saraṇagamanakathā*, DNA3, DNA8, MNA18, SNA1, SNA2, SNA5, ANA1, and many times in *Khuddaka Nikāya*. Note the „shine" (*samujjala*) in the word-compound (*samāsa*). Perhaps it indicates the nobility of the new devotee and emphasizes the achievement of the Buddha to arouse faith even in such person.

<i>Ettha tu dve pādatalāni ekaṃ katvā, tathā dve jāṇumaṇḍalāni ekaṃ, dve kapparāni ekaṃ, dve haṭṭhatalāni ekaṃ, sīsāṃ ekaṃ katvā pañcapaṭiṭṭhitasarūpaṃ kathenti.</i>	There however the two soles of feet are one, then the two knees are one, the two elbows are one, the two palms are one, and the had being one – all (together) are the manner of five establishments, (some) say.
<i>Esa nayo pāliatṭhakathāṭikāsu na diṭṭho."</i>	This manner (however) is not told in the (main) scriptures, (not even) in the commentaries. <sup>9</sup>

A well-known case of stroking feet of “the Teacher” is documented in the Brahmāyu Sutta, where the aged man not only strokes the Buddha’s feet, but even kisses them.<sup>10</sup> It is very rare to see this point practiced by monks when they pay respect to elder monks. However, it is not impossible to see this when lay people pay respect to monks. I have seen certain Sinhalese and Burmese people paying respects this way. From this point I also suppose, that the modern style of placing hands on the floor has simply arose as the symbolic way of stroking the feet. This might be especially recommended when the monk is sitting too far, or in lotus posture (*padmāsana*). I believe that the symbol of placing hands on the ground also arose either because certain lay people (and monks) were too shy to touch the monk’s feet, or because the monk didn’t wish it. Vietnamese Buddhists have not only forgotten the original meaning of the hands placed on the ground, but they developed a new meaning – saying that the hands at the chest symbolize having a lotus flower, and placing them on the ground symbolizes offering of the (doubled) lotus – and they even turn their hands palms-up to symbolize the offering of the lotuses.

And what about women? Are women supposed to “stroke feet” of the Buddha, Arahants, and other ‘elder’ monks? In Myanmar, women believe that “if a woman touches a monk, she will be born in hell”. I am not aware of the source of this belief, but from a brief story in *Vinaya Piṭaka* it seems that women also paid respect by the “five establishments” or at least in a way similar to it (?). See this story from the Second *Saṅghādisesa’s Vinītavatthu*.

*Vinaya Piṭaka – Pārājikapāli – Saṅghādisesakaṇḍa – Kāyasaṃsaggasikkhāpada – Vinītavatthu*

<i>Pāli</i>	Translation by I.B. Horner <sup>11</sup>
<i>Tena kho pana samayena aññataro bhikkhu itthiyā vandantiyā sāratto pādaṃ uccāresi.</i>	Now at one time a certain monk, infatuated by a woman who made reverence, raised his foot.
<i>Tassa kukkuccaṃ ahosi...pe...</i>	He was remorseful ...
<i>"āpattiṃ tvam, bhikkhu, āpanno saṅghādisesa”nti.</i>	"... formal meeting of the Order," he said.

<sup>9</sup> Note that this style of paying respect is known only in Myanmar. The source of this explanation is Vinayālaṅkāra Tīkā, which was (according to *Sāsanavaṃsa - Dve there paṭicca paṭhamam sāsanaṃsa paṭiṭṭhāna*) composed by ven. Badaravanavāsī in the era of Siri Khetta (Śrī Kṣētra) in Myanmar.

<sup>10</sup> See this translation of the *MN 91. Brahmāyu Sutta* - <http://awake.kiev.ua/dhamma/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/2Majjhima-Nikaya/Majjhima2/091-brahmayu-e1.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Copied from “The Book of the Discipline – Vinayaṭṭakam”, I.B. Horner [with “supplementary translation by Bhikkhu Brahmali”], SuttaCentral, 2014, p.281.

## 2. The Three Worlds

Buddhist philosophy is not as complicated as it may seem, if one well understands the different standpoints from which certain discourses are explained. The most basic standpoints from which Dhamma was expounded by the Buddha are mentioned in *Ariguttara Nikāya*<sup>12</sup> as 'inferred meaning' (*nītattha*) and 'meaning to be inferred' (*neyyattha*). In the *Milindapañhā*<sup>13</sup> we find these also as 'ultimate' (*paramattha*) and 'conventional' (*sammuti*)

"Ultimate truth" is the very core of the Buddha's teachings. It is the exposition of impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). It is the teachings of emptiness (*suññatā*) in the universal conditionality (*idappaccayatā*). It is the result of analyzing world into four elements, mind and body, and six sense-doors with their respective objects. It is the highest understanding and the most powerful knowledge, which causes destruction of all defilements upon reaching its highest level, when one becomes an Arahant. It is most essential for the meditation practice, and should be but wisely applied in the everyday life.

"Conventional truth" in Dhamma is the 'crutch' for most Buddhists and meditation practitioners, which leads to understanding of the ultimate truth. Conventional truth is what the Buddha most taught to the lay people, and what is often misunderstood as the ultimate truth. People need language, perceptions, ideas, thoughts, evaluation, rational discrimination, and relationships, if they want to survive peacefully one with another. It is the conventional truth, which allows to recognize mother as mother, father as father, table as table, need to eat or take rest, displeasure in heat and cold, etc. Conventional truth is important when talking with others, because only then we recognize another person as 'another entity', an issue as 'a particular problem', and so on.

Ultimate truth cannot be applied when we solve everyday problems, such as applying for Visa, parenting, founding an organization, etc. In such cases we need to recognize this body and mind as a person with name and age, the institution that we deal with, the issue that we recognize, and the plan for solving or fulfilling the expectations. All that is application of conventional truth. If we took all for four elements, all for 'impermanent' and 'unsatisfactory', there would be no applying for Visa, no parenting, no founding of organization, etc. However, even during these activities it is possible to apply 'wisdom'. 'Wisdom', or '*sampajañña*', also translated as 'clear comprehension', may consist of ultimate truth up to some extent. Wisdom is fourfold – 1. Understanding what is our purpose (*sāttaka-sampajañña*), 2. Understanding what is suitable (*sappāya-sampajañña*), 3. Understanding the basis of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) that we are aware of at the moment (*gocara-sampajañña*), and 4. Understanding of presence and absence of mindfulness in our mind (*asammoha-sampajañña*). We also should understand the impermanence (*aniccā*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) in all things at least up to the extent of what is not conducive on the Noble Path toward Nibbāna. Finally, the most 'thorough' wisdom in everyday life problems is the domain of Arahants and Buddhas, hence we all have a lot of work to perfect our manners and behavior.

Several times in commentaries, then in Visuddhimagga and other later scriptures, we may find another similar concept. In this case there are three attitudes, seeing the world either as 'beings' (*sattaloka*), 'space' (*okāsaloka*), or 'formations' (*saṅkhārāloka*). We may find these three explained in the 'sub-commentary for Visuddhimagga'<sup>14</sup> (assuming that 'Visuddhimagga' is a commentary).

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<sup>12</sup> AN 2.3. Bālavagga.

<sup>13</sup> Milindapañhā – 4. Meṇḍakapañhā - 7. Bhikkhusaṅghapariharaṇapañhā

<sup>14</sup> Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā (Paramatthamañjūsā) - 7. Chaanussatiniddesavaṇṇanā - 1. Buddhānussatikathāvaṇṇanā - §136.

Pāḷi	English translation by monk Sarana according Masi-Mu Nissaya <sup>15</sup>
<i>Tattha indriyabaddhānaṃ khandhānaṃ samūho, santāno ca <b>sattaloko</b>.</i>	There the <b>world of beings</b> is the multitude of the (five) aggregates bound to the (six) senses, and the stream (of consciousness).
<i>Rūpādīsu sattavisattatāya satto, lokīyanti ettha kusalākusalāṃ, tabbipāko cāti lokoti.</i>	It is also "world" because the 'being' (is called being because of) the clinging and much clinging to the body and so on (i.e. to the five aggregates), and (also) because of the <i>kamma</i> and it's result.
<i>Anindriyabaddhānaṃ rūpādīnaṃ samūho, santāno ca <b>okāsaloko</b></i>	The multitude of matter (/bodies) not bound to (six) senses and (such) streams (is called) the <b>world of space</b> .
<i>lokiyanti ettha tasā, thāvarā ca, tesaṃca okāsaḥhūtoti.</i>	There the "world" is the moving, permanent, and also being space for them (i.e. for the beings).
<i>Tadādhāratāya hesa "bhājanaloko"tipi vuccati.</i>	Being thus the 'holder', it is even called "the vessel world".
<i>Ubhayepi khandhā <b>saṅkhāraloko</b> paccayehi saṅkharīyanti, lujjanti palujjanti cāti.</i>	As in both (world of beings and world of space) the aggregates are formed by conditions, break and dissolve, (it is called) <b>world of formations</b> .

### 3. Jumping to fire vs. kamma (proverb)

The Buddha has well explained, that *kamma* (intentionally committed action) is not the only cause of our unpleasant feelings. Unpleasant feelings are caused by eight causes – bile, phlegm, wind, their combination, temperature/weather, carelessness, enemy, and *kamma*.<sup>16</sup> It is easy to forget about this, because most of the Pāḷi scriptures describe only the last cause. There are two Burmese proverbs that remind us to be careful and not be too confident when we seem to be quite lucky:

1. Don't trample a heap of thorns believing in (your good) *kamma*. (Kanko yone-ywet hsu-pone ma-ninn-yar. [ကံကိုယုံ၍ ဆူးပုံ မနင်းရာ။])<sup>17</sup>
2. Don't walk (/“descend”) into a fire believing in (your good) *kamma*. (Kan yone mi-pone ma-hsin-yar. [ကံယုံ မီးပုံမဆင်းရာ။])<sup>18</sup>

### 4. A Fief and its Holy Duplicate - Hopone City (ဟိုပုန်းမြို့ / ဟိုပုံးမြို့)

Notes from Myanmar Encyclopedia [“မြန်မာ့စွယ်စုံကျမ်း - စာပေဗိမာန်၏ ရုပ်ပြဟုသုတဘက်”, Myanmar Naingang Bhathar-Pyan-Sar-Pe Athin [မြန်မာနိုင်ငံဘာသာပြန်စာပေအသင်း], Yangon, 1973; vol. 13, pp. 480-482.

- In Shan state, Taunggyi Region, Hopone Township; 12 miles east from Taung-Gyi (the capital of Shan State).
- The name comes from the river-stream called 'pone' ('ပင်' in Shan, 'ပုန်း' in Burmese) and the stream's starting point 'ho' ('ဟို'), where the city was built. The river-stream flows through a ravine, which is between two hill-ranges east from Inle Lake.
- Elders say that when Mons started to expand and proper (in S Burma), a group of farmers led by Nga Hsaw Bhan (ငဆော်ဘန်) came to this site overgrown with bushes etc., cleaned it up, settled there and from the little settlement later became a big village, then finally a city.

<sup>15</sup> "New Nissaya for Sub-Commentary of Visuddhimagga" [ဝိသုဒ္ဓိမဂ္ဂမဟာဋီကာ နိဿယသစ်], Mahasi Version [မဟာစည်မူ], vol.2, p.21.

<sup>16</sup> SN 4.2(36).3.1. *Sīvaka Sutta*.

<sup>17</sup> In "Myanmar Proverbs" [မြန်မာစကားပုံ], Myanmar Ministry of Education - Department of Literature [ပြည်ထောင်စုသမ္မတမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော် ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ မြန်မာစာအဖွဲ့ဦးစီးဌာန], 2011 [6<sup>th</sup> edition], pp.4-5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.5.

- The settlement was established not long after the close-by Bant-Phar (ဘန်ဖာရှာ) and Nar-Khar (နားခါးရွာ) villages. These three then paid a tribute to the Mon king, under who they took protection. Since it's early history the site was subject to a feudal lord (seigneur) as a fief-town (မြို့စား). When the Shan saophas ceased their power over it in 1959, it became a separate township of Myanmar.
- The city contains various regional administrative offices, corporations, a middle-school and (several) primary schools. It has 212 miles<sup>2</sup>, and in 1972 67000 inhabitants comprising mostly of Shan Buddhists and Pa-Os. Most common languages there are Shan, Pa-O, and Burmese.
- There are altogether around 30 pagodas and monasteries, including the famous pagoda Shwe Chan Thar Zedidaw (ရွှေချမ်းသာစေတီတော်). Shwe Chan Thar pagoda contains a spontaneously appeared duplicate of Buddha's Relic. This duplicate appeared by 'act of truth' determination<sup>19</sup> of the Pagan king Alaung-Si-Thu, who wished for that, to bestow it to the people of Hopone. First the pagoda was called 'mwe-daw' (မွေတော်) meaning 'Relic'. It was 12 cubits high. Later the king Badone Min (ပဒုံမင်း) (also known as Bodaw Phayar (ဘိုးတော်ဘုရား)) extended the height to 80 cubits and built 200 cubits long 'Mahārāma' (မဟာရာမ) wall around. In 1923 the pagoda was called 'Shwe Chan Thar' meaning 'Golden Satisfaction' to mark it the focus-point of the region. There's a pagoda festival every year two times: once on the 6<sup>th</sup> day after Dazaungmone full-moon day, and on 6<sup>th</sup> day after Dabaung full-moon day.
- There's a 9000 feet high Lway-May (လွယ်မယ် / လွယ်မောင်) hill, a large, very peaceful, Htan-Sant Cave (ထန်စန်လိုက်ဂူ), and the Hopone outlet (water-stream) where people get drinking water and water for domestic use – all of which make the region a pleasant site to see.
- The city's main business is of sebesten tree leaves (used for rolling cheroots), but exported are also potatoes, garlic, pepper, flour, groundnut (= peanut), rice, coffee, and oranges.
- It is located on the Meikthila (မိတ္ထီလာ) – Kyaing-Tone (ကျိုင်းတုံ) road. 85 miles away by road is the Kayah capital Lwain-Kaw (လွိုင်ကော်). Because the land road is much in use, there have been constructed no air or marine means of transport in this township.

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<sup>19</sup> *Adhiṭṭhāna* = determination, also called '*sacca kiriya*' = act of truth. This is a true utterance of one's virtue or Buddha's virtue in 'if' form, wishing for anything good. Most famous example is in the *Jātaka* 35 – *Vaṭṭa Jātaka*, being the sixth chanting of the set of eleven basic chantings (*Parittapāḷi*) chanted throughout Myanmar - "(74.) There's saving merit in virtue in this world; Truth, purity of life, and compassion too, Thereby, I'll work a matchless Act of Truth. (75.) Remembering the Law's might, and reflecting, On those who triumphed in the days gone by, Depending on the might of truth, an Act of Truth I wrought." ( <http://www.myanmar.net/nibbana/mahapri1.htm> )